

Successors of Suffering and Sorrow

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Additional Tags:	Other Additional Tags to Be Added , Angst , OOC characters , please read the tags , AND TRIGGER WARNINGS IN THE NOTES , Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism , Underage Drinking , Insanity , Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD , Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence , Hallucinations , Amnesia , Vomiting , suicide ideation , Flashbacks , Suicide Attempt , Villain TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , villain ranboo , Villain Purpled , villain Tubbo , Protective TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Protective Tubbo , Protective Ranboo , Protective Purpled , Traumatized TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Depressed TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Ram Hybrid Tubbo , Ranboo Hears A Voice (Video Blogging RPF) , Dissociation , Suicidal Thoughts , Self-Hatred , Self-Esteem Issues , Panic Attacks , Anxiety Attacks , Hyperventilation
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by [goodbye \(ecinue\)](#)

Summary

Tommy looks tired, far too tired for a child. Tubbo looks furious, far too angry for someone his age. Ranboo looks confused, a kid brought into a war with hardly any knowledge. Purpled looks weary, the burden of a world on his shoulders.

Maybe it was the way that Tommy's dull eyes glimpse Phil and he instantly reaches for his flask. Maybe it was the way that Tubbo sees Niki and he bares his teeth, insanity flickering in his eyes. Maybe it was the way that Ranboo catches Technoblade in his gaze and he looks up tiredly. Maybe it's the way that Purpled only stares blankly at Punz, emotions long gone behind a mask of emptiness.

At that moment, every other person there realizes something. They brought these kids to war. These are the consequences.

Child soldiers are still children. Children who've gone through hell and back will stop at nothing to see the world burn. These children are filled with flames of burning passion, a fire lit within them of happiness and joy.

The world took those flames and trampled on them. This is the result.

Notes

Takes place after Doomsday and before the final confrontation against Dream. A "what if" scenario. Please read the bottom of the summaries of every chapter for the trigger warnings and read the tags.

I have placed TW's on every chapter. Please let me know if I missed one in the comments.

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Spiral

Chapter Summary

TW//alcoholism, underage alcoholism, PTSD, flashbacks, trauma, insanity, hallucinations, vomiting, dissociation

L'manberg falls for a final time and an era comes to an end.

There's a smoking crater and there is debris everywhere. In the back, the charred remains of L'mantree flicker her last flame before it too dies out. The caravan, the podium, the houses, the docks, the boardwalk, the lanterns—

They're all gone.

If he closes his eyes, he can still see Wilbur parading the streets, laughing as he leads a baby Fundy around. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Sally leave on a boat at the docks, her red hair waving in the distance. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Eret waving as they build another building. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Niki weaving flower crowns and offering pastries.

If he closes his eyes, he can still see Schlatt walking towards him, waving. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Quackity shouting bazinga from somewhere as he prepares. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Jack walking away from their nation, back to his own land. If he closes his eyes, he can still see Tubbo brewing a potion and waving to him a joyous smile. If he closes his eyes, he can still see himself walking on the boardwalk, humming Cat quietly.

Then, he opens his eyes and he's faced with reality.

Wilbur and Schlatt are dead. Sally left them long ago. Eret chooses to stay away. Quackity's going insane, even more so with Schlatt gone. Niki and Jack team up in a mutual agreement, most likely an agreement that leads to the death of himself and Tubbo. Fundy's suffering and for that, he pities the fox.

There's only Tubbo left at his side. They stand above the crater as the rain pours down, hand-in-hand, Tommy leaning against Tubbo for support.

"It's over, isn't it?"

Tubbo glances over. "Not really. Not yet."

"L'manberg's gone, Tubbo. There's nothing left of it."

"L'manberg's always been about the people, Toms." Tubbo turns slightly to face Tommy.
"L'manberg's never been just a place, has it?"

"What people?" Tommy asked tiredly. For once, it seemed as if all of the tolls of war and exile had overwhelmed him, whisking the Tommy that Tubbo knew away, leaving behind a tired husk. "Schlatt brought this place to ruins, Niki and Fundy fucked off somewhere else, Quackity doesn't care, Jack never cared, Eret's long gone, Sally abandoned us, Wilbur's *dead*—" Tubbo inhales sharply—"It's just us now. It's always been us."

"You're giving up?"

"No, of course not!" Tommy grins. "I'm TommyInnit!" His smile falters. "I'm just...tired. Everything I do seems to result in shittier stuff. I'm just tired of the pain in my heart."

Tubbo moves closer to Tommy. "It's not your fault. That's the adults' fault for always pushing us to the edge. They never help us and always push us to the side." He clenches his free hand into a fist. "They're to blame."

"I don't know." Tommy's eyes sweep the scenery. "I'm just tired, Big T."

That was the truth in its entirety and they both knew it. They were teenagers, Tubbo freshly 17 and Tommy still 16, and yet they had been through three wars now. They watched Wilbur, their elder brother figure, the man that *raised* them...they watched him fall and die at the hands of the man the duo once knew as "father". They went through abuse from Schlatt and Dream. There's so much more but if they were to list it all off, they'd be here for a month.

The thought of it all made Tommy feel even more exhausted. He was so tired of everything. He was tired of everyone leaving him, using him, taking advantage of his loyalties to them, and trying to turn him against Tubbo. He was so fucking tired. He wondered if he would live his entire life like this.

The thought of it all made Tubbo furious, made him seethe with rage. He was so angry with the adults that placed the world's burden on his and Tommy's shoulders, blaming them for everything, using them as if they were toys. He was vengeful and furious and he wanted more than nothing to make them pay.

"Do you think Wilbur hates me?" Tommy's voice cuts through both their thoughts.

"What?"

"Do you think Wilbur hates me?" Tommy repeats, voice shaking slightly. "Do you think he's disappointed in me?"

"Why do you think that?" Tubbo whispers, gripping Tommy's hand tightly.

"I mean, I'm the catalyst for all these wars and in the end, I even lost his final gift to us all." Tommy looks at the crater again, despair etched on his face. "He left L'manberg in my hands and I failed him."

"He left it in *our* hands. If anything, we all failed him."

"It's my fault."

Tubbo goes silent, squeezing Tommy's hand a little tighter in his own. The air of L'manberg suddenly feels suffocating and the wind howls in agony, the cold breeze leeching onto the two teens.

"What do we do now?" Tommy asks.

"What do you want to do?" Tubbo responds.

"I want..." Tommy's hesitant in a way that Tubbo hasn't seen in a long time. Something had happened to his ~~friend~~ *brother* and he didn't know how to handle it. "...I don't know. I want to make Dream pay. He hurt me. He hurt you. He hurt us."

"Tommy." Tubbo's voice shakes but it's stern. "What did Dream do to you in exile?"

Tommy's entire body goes rigid and stiff and his breath stutters, as if he's too scared to talk about it. That's fine. They'll talk about it eventually. "I...I can't say."

"Okay. Do you want to go back to Snowchester? We can take a nap."

"Yeah...yeah, I'd like that, Big T."

Here is a truth: Tubbo is insane.

He's known this for a while. This does not surprise him. He had been in the kitchen one day when Tommy was asleep. At that moment, that vulnerable moment when he was alone, the voices had arrived.

***(KILL KILL YOU SHOULD GET REVENGE HELLO TUBBO KILL REVENGE
DEMOLISH DREAM)***

"W-What?!" Tubbo breathed out, glancing around the room, searching for the booming voices. There was no one else in the room other than Tommy sleeping on the couch visible through the archway to the living room. Tubbo was alone. "W-Who's there?!"

***(KILL DREAM BLOW IT ALL UP KILL AVENGE TOMMY WE HAVE TO AVENGE
HIM)***

"Stop! I don't want to kill anyone!"

(AVENGE BLOW IT ALL UP KILL BE BETTER WORTHLESS FOOL PATHETIC)

"STOP!"

He's sobbing and he sinks to his knees, digging his hands into his scalp as he cries. Was this how Wilbur used to feel? Overwhelmed, conflicted, absolutely crazy? He felt like his head was splitting; like he was going to *die*.

There's someone kneeling in front of him, a warm melody echoing in the air. Tubbo faintly recognizes it as Cat and he sniffs, digging the heels of his palms into the corner of his eyes. He blinks through his blurry vision to see Tommy there. Tommy's humming Cat and Tubbo wails, plopping himself into Tommy's waiting arms.

"It's going to be okay," Tommy murmurs, "it's okay, Tubs. It's okay."

He doesn't know if he can believe that.

Tubbo is the son of JSchlatt (*the Mad Goat*), the adopted son of Philza (*the Angel of Death*), the adopted brother of both Wilbur Soot (*the Insane President*) and TommyInnit (*Icarus*), and he was the former president of L'manberg (*a doomed nation*).

He is Tubbo, an Atlas amongst all else.

Here is a lie: Tommy is fine.

He is absolutely fine. It doesn't matter that he wakes up screaming and begging for Dream to spare him, for Wilbur to come back, for Technoblade and Philza not to leave. It doesn't matter that his eyes are dull and he's broken and he relies on a flask of alcohol to drown his worries and wash away the pain. He is fine.

"You're a disappointment."

"Hmph," Tommy clicks his tongue in slight annoyance, masking his hurt with a facade of blankness as he rummages through the kitchen cabinets. "That's nothing new. You've never really liked me."

"You're right," Philza's standing near the kitchen table, a look of apathetic hatred on his face as he stares at Tommy, *"you've always been an annoying little wanker."*

"If I'm so annoying, why'd you even have me?" Tommy pulls out a bottle of alcohol and sniffs it, wrinkling his nose at the scent of cheap booze. Ah well. It'll have to do. He removes

a wineglass from the cabinet and pours himself a shot, downing it at rapid speeds.

"Should've just chucked me."

"I should've never had you," Philza laments.

"Fuck off, old man," Tommy grumbles, downing another shot. "Go back to your favorite child."

Philza leaves but Technoblade's there and Tommy wonders why he even bothers trying. He takes another shot. He won't get drunk, he refuses to get drunk, and he knows that he can't get drunk unless he wants to send Tubbo into a panic attack.

"Hallo, Theseus." Technoblade's greeting remains the same even when he is all but a figment of Tommy's imagination. *"You look terrible."*

"Fuck off." Another shot.

"Tsk," Technoblade clicks his tongue, *"always so loud and obnoxious. No wonder everyone hates you and leaves you."*

"Leave me alone, Technoblade." One more shot.

The warrior gracefully maneuvers himself to stand next to the door. *"Pathetic boy who wants to be a hero. You should've heed my warnings. After all, if you want to be a hero, you have to die like one."*

Tommy lifts his head weakly, glaring. "Fuck off."

"You know that I'm right, Theseus."

"I'm not Theseus!" Tommy growls, slamming his empty glass on the table. "I'm Tommy."

"Are you?"

Technoblade exits through the door and Wilbur sweeps in. Tommy feels the color drain from his face and his breath seems to turn shallower by the second. Wilbur's expression is dark and he lacks any ounce of warmth in his being, radiating the insanity and hatred he held during the Pogtopia era.

"Tommy."

"W-Wilbur?" He stammers.

"You don't ever listen do you?" Wilbur growls. Tommy scrambles back, clutching the half-empty bottle in his hands, trying to get away from Wilbur. *"Useless."*

"I'm sorry!" Tommy wails. "I'm sorry Wilbur!"

"You had one fucking job and you blew it!" Wilbur spat. *"You couldn't even do a simple thing such as protect L'manberg! No wonder Tubbo exiled you!"*

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Tommy babbled as he tried to down more of the alcohol. Tears streamed down his cheeks and his chest felt tight as if it would explode. The more he drank, the less it hurt, but the more tears. It's okay. Tears were better than pain.

Suddenly Dream's there, looming over him, that terrifying porcelain mask staring down at Tommy.

"Useless. Pathetic. Ungrateful." Dream croons.

Tommy's sobbing, unable to form coherent words as he babbles apologies.

"Worthless."

Tommy takes the last swig and the bottle falls to the ground, the glass crashing as he wails, digging his hands into his hair, crying as he curls into a ball, hiccuping.

He reaches towards the cabinet for another bottle.

Upstairs, Tubbo freezes when he hears the sound of glass crashing against the ground. His breath becomes shallow and his heartbeat increases. Is Schlatt coming to beat him again? Is Schlatt coming to yell at him again? God, he hopes not.

His eyes flit around the room, looking for space he could hide in. Under the bed? No, too obvious. In the closet? No way; Schlatt would instantly know. Maybe he could sneak out through the window and go to Eret's castle? Shit shit shit, he had to hurry, Schlatt was coming, Schlatt was—

Schlatt was dead.

The realization was like a breath of fresh air and he gasped, intaking precious oxygen into his deprived lungs. He coughed a few times, feeling his body tremble from the memories of a drunken Schlatt. He never wants anyone to ever go through what he did; no person should ever have to suffer through a trauma like that.

There's a hiccuping sound and a crying sound coming from downstairs and Tubbo hesitantly walks down the stairs. He peeks into the kitchen and his heart drops to his stomach.

Tommy's curled on the floor, hugging a bottle of nearly finished wine to his chest, tears streaking down his cheeks. He's mumbling to himself and there are glass shards around the floor from what appears to be an empty broken beer bottle.

"Toms?" He calls out tentatively.

Tommy looks up, dull eyes glazed over as he slurs, "Tubs?"

"Oh prime," Tubbo breathes out, walking over to crouch down, carefully avoiding the glass shards. "Why are you drinking?"

"Dunno," Tommy mumbles, holding the bottle tightly, "made th'pain go away."

"Oh." Tubbo's response was pitiful and sad and he knew exactly how Tommy felt. "...I see."

"I heard them Tubs." Tommy looks so broken. "I heard them."

Tubbo grabs a bottle of water and kneels, avoiding the shards, gently prying the bottle out of Tommy's fingers and setting it aside, tilting Tommy's head so that he could drink the water.

"Who did you hear?"

"Phil and Techno and Wilbur and Dream..."

"What did they say?"

Tommy chokes a sob and he shakes his head, babbling again. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry..."

Tubbo exhales shakily and lets Tommy crumble. "It's okay," he whispers, "it's okay."

Lies.

Later, when Tommy sobered up and finished vomiting his guts into the toilet, they talked about it. They came to an agreement, albeit a shitty decision. They decided that Tommy could drink in moderate amounts from a flask (a flask that Tubbo painstakingly makes, embroidering bee patterns and music discs onto it) and Tommy would only drink when Tubbo was around to prevent a spiral.

They agreed.

But that was later and that is not now. For now, they were content to sit on the kitchen floor, surrounded by broken glass and spilled booze. They were content with curling against each other, murmuring apologies to each other, to the world, and they were content with washing their pain away with alcohol and booze.

It's okay. ~~It's not okay.~~

Tommy is the son of Philza (*the Angel of Death*), the brother of Wilbur Soot (*the Insane President*), the uncle of Fundy (*the Lost Child*), and the adopted brother of Tubbo (*Atlas*). He went to war against Dream (*the Treacherous Admin*) and he is still alive.

He is Tommy, an Icarus that infinitely burns.

A week later, there's a knock on their door. Tubbo yanks the door open to be greeted by Ranboo. The endermen hybrid stares at the duo with an incredulous and surprised expression. Tubbo had definitely just woken up and looked to be very grumpy, Tommy leaning against him and peering at him with tired eyes surrounded by eyebags.

"What?" Tubbo grumbled, shifting Tommy so that the taller teen didn't fall off.

"Can I..." Ranboo was hesitant, "...can I stay with you guys?"

Tubbo glared at him. "I thought you were with Technoblade and Philza. Why are you suddenly coming to us? I would've thought that you'd like the retirement life."

"I did," Ranboo sighs, looking forlorn, "but chaos follows Phil and Techno endlessly. Besides, I don't know how I feel about staying with two people who left Tommy in Dream's control."

"That's it?"

"Look, I'll explain everything, I promise." Ranboo's eyes flitted nervously to Tommy and then back to Tubbo. "I'm just here for Tommy. I owe him. I also...I just can't be near Dream any longer. I feel like I'm *dying*."

Tubbo opened his mouth to protest but a quiet hum erupted from Tommy's throat and Tubbo stiffened. Tommy smiled, a small and tired smile. It almost felt like Ranboo was looking at Phil.

"Come in," Tommy croaked, opening the door a little wider. "We have a lot to talk about."

"So...what you're telling us is that you hear this voice in your head that tries to tell you to do bad stuff?" Tubbo says it carefully, suspicion laced in his voice.

"Yes."

"And...you find smiles in your memory book? Smiles that resemble Dream's mask?"

"Yes."

"Did you blow up the community house?" Tommy asks quietly.

Ranboo pales. "I...I don't remember."

Tubbo turns to Tommy and rapidly hums something, something that suspiciously sounds like a mix between the melodies of Mellohi and 13. Tommy hums back with a mix of Mellohi and Cat. The humming goes back and forth and Ranboo fidgets uneasily. It feels as if he's intruding on a private moment.

Eventually, Tommy seems to hum a melody that is purely Cat and Tubbo sharply turns, storming upstairs in a fury. Tommy only watches him go and smiles, sitting back down at the

dinner table. He pulls out a flask and takes a swig, Ranboo wrinkling his nose at the scent of booze.

"Sorry about that," Tommy apologizes, "Tubbo's just been a little on edge recently. You can stay."

"Are you...are you sure I can stay?" Ranboo asks hesitantly. "I don't want to intrude or make you guys uncomfortable."

"It's fine," Tommy says in response, taking another shot of his flask. "Us minors have to stick together after all."

Somehow, Ranboo finds comfort in those words.

Purpled joins them two days later, a large backpack on his back.

He's silent and foreboding when he arrives on their doorstep and, for a moment, Ranboo's terrified that Purpled's been sent by Dream to exterminate them. Tubbo's wary too, always wary these days, but Tommy had been the one to walk forward and welcome Purpled in. It was strange if you asked Ranboo. It was almost as if Tommy and Tubbo swapped mindsets.

He wasn't surprised though. Trauma, alcohol, and insanity could switch a person in the blink of an eye. Wilbur and Schlatt were fine examples of that, Tommy had once told him.

"Why are you here?" Ranboo had asked curiously.

Purpled had turned to him with a bitter smile and said, "Someone has to look out for the three of you. Besides, us minors have to stay together."

They leave it at that. Purpled has never been one for explaining himself.

They are four boys living together in a small house in Snowchester. They develop a strange routine of sorts, a strange routine that makes others wary.

Every morning, Ranboo would be the first to rise, always blearily and dizzily, not knowing where he was. It took him an hour generally to remember where he was and that was when Purpled entered the room to gently coax him back to reality. The duo would then head down the hall to the room that Tubbo and Tommy shared and quietly shake the other two awake.

They would go downstairs where, more often than not, Purpled and Tommy made breakfast. It was a moment of time where they all treasured, just four sleepy boys going about with their morning routine. Ranboo and Tubbo didn't hear the voices in the morning, Purpled didn't worry his mind out, and Tommy didn't drink. Mornings were generally peaceful.

Yet, all peace comes to an end.

When breakfast was over, Tommy and Tubbo would head to the coat rack and put on their respective jackets, jackets that Purpled had brought over as a "peace offering" of sorts. It was Wilbur's trenchcoat and Schlatt's suit jacket, both mended and cleaned. When Tubbo asked, Purpled had merely turned away and said that someone gave it to him. ~~He doesn't tell them that he had dug through the debris of the podium and he found it by coincidence.~~

Wilbur's trenchcoat billows around Tommy and the thin boy tucks his flask into the breast pocket on the inside of the jacket, a new addition that Tubbo helped fashion for him. Schlatt's jacket acts as a cape on Tubbo, draped on his shoulders, his arms free. They murmur to each other, nod at the other two, and leave the house, most likely heading to the nuke testing site. Tubbo had been preparing weapons for a while and he wanted to make sure that they were safe. Where Tubbo went, Tommy followed, and thus, they never separated.

Before Purpled had joined, Ranboo had been frustrated at being left behind. Yet, now that Purpled was here, they spent their afternoons sparing. Ranboo, albeit a pacifist, could not forgive Dream for what Dream has done to the other three and the rest of the server. He cannot and *will not* forgive Dream for what the Admin has done.

Purpled is good at sparring and Ranboo struggles to keep up. He takes Purpled's tips to heart albeit he consistently forgets them. Purpled is patient, however, more patient than Ranboo had expected. He acts like a pillar of stability and for a moment, Ranboo is taken aback by how stable Purpled seems to be.

The other boy wears a purple hoodie at all times, unlike Ranboo's neat suit and crown, and Purpled never leaves his sword behind. In fact, Purpled has been able to sleep standing up and he often slept on the couch, refusing to take a bed. Ranboo had asked him once and Purpled had merely answered, "It's a habit."

They are four boys living together in a small house in Snowchester. They are broken and traumatized and they are deemed as the successors to their irresponsible and ignorant elders.

They carve their own path.

(What they don't mention are the countless hours that they spent comforting each other.

Tubbo stays up late into the night and it takes a combined effort of the three other boys to drag him off to bed. He has eyebags that sink in beneath his eyes and his thin frame is covered by the bulkiness of Schlatt's jacket. He's so thin and yet, he forces himself to keep going, a side effect of his presidential era. He cannot and will not stay in small spaces; his trauma at the first festival resulted in severe claustrophobia. He screams and cries when the voices become too loud and Tommy is the designated person to calm him down. Sometimes, rarely, when he's unable to focus on reality, he stares out a window and watches the bees float about.

Tommy drinks and drinks, drowning his sorrows in booze. He wakes up screaming and crying for Dream to spare him, for his family to return to him, and he dissociates irregularly. It's strange, truly, to see the ever-so boisterous TommyInnit be reduced to this empty soulless shell of himself. He's terrified of crossbows and bows and he never removes Wilbur's trenchcoat, one hand clutching Tubbo and the other holding a trident at all times. He's always ready to run and this time, he makes a silent vow to never leave Tubbo behind.

Ranboo spirals hard, forgetting things at times. His amnesia is bad and the voice in his head is screaming for attention. He avoids water, naturally, and the other three can't find it in themselves to get angry with him when he forgets something. It isn't his fault, after all. Sometimes, Ranboo will feel guilty that Tubbo flinches away from him, his suit reminding Tubbo too much of Technoblade. Sometimes, his green eyes make Tommy's breath hitch, too much like Dream. Sometimes, his forgetful and awkward nature makes it hard for him to communicate with Purpled, the other blocking off his emotions. He cries and the water burns his skin. The others stay and comfort him.

Purpled is distant, much more distant than they expected. Tubbo and Tommy are a pair, an all-or-nothing package. Ranboo is used to being alone. More often than not, Purpled slips into the shadows, only reemerging to help the other three if they needed it. He hides his emotions behind a mask of blankness, a mask carefully schooled to reveal no emotions. He's strong, stronger than they expected, and they crowd him, silently thankful that he's there to bring them back into reality.

They pile together into the same room at some point. Ranboo sleeps in a corner, a strange position, wearing an eye mask that Purpled fashioned. Purpled sleeps on a bed near the door, vehemently refusing to move from near the door. Years of caution have ingrained this tradition into him. Tommy and Tubbo take over the main bed, clinging onto each other.

More often than not, the four of them wake up dogpiled on the bed together. They don't mention how Tubbo woke up screaming in the middle of the night. They don't mention the dried tear marks on Tommy's cheeks. They don't mention how Ranboo is disoriented as hell. They don't mention the letters scarred onto Purpled's arm as he shifts.

They don't speak of it. They merely move on.)

"Once, a really long time ago, Tubbo and I made a promise to each other."

Ranboo glances over from where he's mopping up the spilled booze. Purpled doesn't pause in washing the dishes but his stiff posture gives away that he's still listening. Tommy's sitting on the ground, Tubbo's back against Tommy's back, the results of a screaming match, leaving the house in deafening silence in its wake.

"I told Tubbo that he couldn't be the next Schlatt," whispered Tommy, his dull eyes flickering with sorrow, "and so he told me that I couldn't be the next Wilbur."

Tubbo's tired eyes only revealed the suffering he had been through as he finished, "But we never said that I couldn't be the next Wilbur and that Tommy couldn't be the next Schlatt."

They're quiet again and Ranboo is briefly reminded of how out of his element he is. He didn't know Schlatt nor Wilbur and he doesn't think that he would want to know the two men considering the stories. Purpled speaks up instead, moving away from the sink to sit down on Tommy's right and Tubbo's left, pressing his back against theirs.

"I don't think you guys are like Schlatt or Wilbur," he murmurs. "You guys take aspects from them, sure, but you're nothing like them. Schlatt was a tyrant; you guys actually tried to make things better. Wilbur was just *lost* and he went insane; you guys have each other to ground yourselves. If anything, you guys are better than them."

"Wilbur told me once that he and Schlatt used to be friends," Tommy said, "and then something went wrong. Schlatt betrayed Wilbur, left Wilbur to die, and took off. I don't think Wilbur ever recovered from it."

Tubbo sighed. "Schlatt used to mumble about Wilbur when he was really drunk. Something must've happened."

"Will you listen to my story?" Purpled's voice was quiet but to the other three, it was loud as ever. He glanced up, purple boring into red and green. "Ranboo, sit down first."

Ranboo hastily shoved the mop aside and took his place against Purpled, back pressed to the other three, facing away from them, pressed against Tommy's left arm and Tubbo's right arm. They looked like a weird four-leaf clover of sorts.

"Go ahead," Tubbo urged encouragingly, "we're listening."

"Punz's my brother."

The other three stiffened but said nothing, and thus, Purpled continued.

"He tries his best to keep me safe but...he's not exactly the best role model. What type of lesson is he trying to teach me? Not to be like him? Him, who is so easily swayed with money and will readily murder children?" Purpled fidgeted slightly with his fingers, eyes shadowed. "He hunted you down, Tommy. He was ready to hunt you down again at Dream's orders so long as he got *money*."

His fists clench. "I was practically raised by Callahan and Alyssa and Sam during my time here. They taught me skills, helped me farm materials, gave me guidance. My brother was amazing until he met *Dream*. Dream ruined him. I...I never really felt angry with him until I found out what he did to you guys. Dream *ruined* everything. I won't forgive him."

"You'll have to go through Punz, though," Tommy mumbled, "Surely, you'll have to forgive him."

"Philza's your father," Purpled grunted, "do you forgive him?"

Silence.

"Exactly."

"I don't forgive Dream," Tubbo says quietly. "I don't think I ever will."

"Dream scares me," Ranboo admits, tucking his knees to his chest, "I don't want to go near him."

"He's a lost cause," Purpled grins bitterly, "he can fuck off for all I care."

"Hunt him down." Tommy's words are barely breathed out and yet, they all hear it. "If we hunt him down and put him down for good, he can't hurt anyone again."

"That's a good idea," Tubbo hums.

"Not kill," Purpled says, "not kill. Just...lock away."

"No, no kill," Tommy agrees, "we won't kill. Not yet. Not unless they hurt one of you three. Then I'll kill them and rip them apart."

"Not if I do it first," Ranboo all but growls.

They laugh, all of them, in quiet and low tones. For a moment, the world stopped running and they sat back-to-back-to-back-to-back. They sat together in the silence, the suffocating silence, and they wondered how they would go on with the ever-growing threats in the world.

Something needed to be the catalyst.

How fortunate that Jack and Niki decided to step up and be that catalyst.

Shatter

Chapter Summary

Moments to shattering.

TW//read tags, panic attacks, suicide ideation, suicidal thoughts, murderous thoughts, etc.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

(1)

Tubbo's furious.

Anger boils in his skin, his vision red. The voices howl in his head, demanding bloodshed, demanding vengeance, demanding justice. Tommy's standing behind him, clutching a slightly burnt arm to his chest, the blond's dull eyes gazing at Niki and Jack with sadness.

Niki looks slightly disappointed and Jack looks displeased. Their stiff posture, their averting gazes, the fidgeting fingers, they were practically screaming that they were guilty. The voices did not like them, did not like their cockiness, did not like their blatant disregard for all that Tommy has been through, did not like their deflection of blaming everything on mere children.

Vengeance was like a toxic flower, drawing Tubbo in, demanding that he give in to it. He's more than ready to feed the voices with blood, Niki and Jack's to be specific, but Tommy reaches a hand and tugs on his sleeve roughly and he forces the anger to recede. He forces himself to adorn a mask of pitiful sorrow and sadness and disbelief and betrayal.

"Niki? Jack?" He croaks, voice cracking. "How could you?"

Niki looks fiercely sorrowful and Jack grimaces slightly. The pink-haired girl seems to fuss slightly. "We didn't mean to, Tubbo! It's just..."

She gives Jack a meaningful glance and he sighs. "We didn't know that it would go in Tommy's direction. We're sorry, Tubbo."

They sound sincere, as sincere as a bunch of manipulators could be, incredibly sincere. If the voices hadn't been screaming at him and Tommy hadn't been clutching his burnt arm with dull eyes to his chest, maybe, just *maybe*, Tubbo would've believed them.

Tubbo is kind and Tubbo is protective. Had they explained it to him, he would've tried to help. Tubbo is kind and Tubbo is protective. They did not try to explain it and they tried to kill Tommy. He'll let them go for now but he cannot, *will not*, forgive them.

He turns on his heel, grounds his teeth, forces a few tears to slip so that Niki and Jack can see, grabs Tommy's arm, and flees. He runs back to Snowchester and they enter the house. Purpled's waiting with warm tea and comforting blankets.

(In a different world, Tubbo would've stared at Niki and Jack with a tired and teary gaze, lip pulled in a straight line, hands trembling at his side. That Tubbo would've apologized coldly for taking the time up from Nik and Jack's day. That Tubbo would've pushed Tommy aside and Tommy would've left to find Sam. In that world, Tommy wouldn't have been hurt because Niki and Jack failed.

That is not this world.)

(2)

Ranboo did like the colors of pink and green, once, when he had been staying with Technoblade and Philza. Technoblade was brave and he promised to protect Ranboo. Philza was kind when others weren't and he was like a father figure to Ranboo. He had felt like he *belonged* in that little cottage in the arctic, in that little place he called *home*.

That was until he realized how neglectful Philza could be. That was until he realized how Technoblade had no issues traumatizing children with Dream. That was until Ranboo was hit with the painstaking realization that this was not his family and he was a mere replacement for another boy that used to be standing there in his place.

He had quietly packed up his meager belongings and tracked down Purpled. They talked (a conversation he vows to remember, a conversation that he records in a memory book) and Purpled offered to help Ranboo keep a copy of his memory book, just in case something happened to the original. Ranboo had nearly cried.

Daily life with the other three teens was strange. Sometimes, he woke up confused and lost, not remembering anything and scrambling for the memory book on his nightstand. He sat there, alone, wallowing, and allowed the memories to slowly drift back, swallowing his time. Almost daily, Purpled would walk in, warm milk at the ready. Frequently, Tubbo would poke his head in, offering a tired nod and the silent offering of breakfast. Rarely, Tommy would be up, flask tucked to his chest as he gently drops off a stuffed animal.

(Tommy did that with all of them. They each had a few stuffed animals. Tubbo had said that Niki had taught Tommy how to sew, once, long long ago.)

Now, Ranboo watches warily, sitting on the roof of their house in Snowchester, watching Philza and Technoblade climb over borders and heading over to the debris that was once

L'manberg. They're searching for something and they've been searching for weeks. He doesn't know what they're searching for but his gut is insisting that it's nothing nice.

He gazes down at them before climbing down, heading back inside. Purpled's polishing a sword and Tubbo's cooking dinner.

"Philza and Technoblade are near L'manberg's ruins," Ranboo reports. "I don't know what they're searching for."

Tubbo and Tommy are instantly on guard but Purpled merely sets his sword down, shaking his head. He had experience with being neutral during disasters and he had experience watching from the sidelines.

"Don't do anything," Purpled murmurs. "It's not time yet. They're probably just looking for something Wilbur left behind. We'll pretend like we didn't see anything."

The other three didn't question it and merely nodded.

Once, Ranboo had thought that pink was Technoblade's bravery for everything and green was Philza's kindness for everyone. Yet, he knew, he *learned*, that pink was courage, the bravery to keep going, the bravery to keep going and barrel past the mistakes. He *learned* that green wasn't kindness; it was guilt. Philza wasn't kind; he felt guilty.

Once, Ranboo thought Technoblade and Philza were kind. He was wrong.

They were cruel with the illusion of kindness. *(He wondered if Wilbur Soot had been this way as well.)*

(3)

Tommy's tired.

He's too tired for someone his age, for someone with his frame, for someone of his nature. He's far too tired and no matter how much he sleeps and rests, the exhaustion lingers in his bones, refusing to go away. He wakes up in the mornings and he wonders why couldn't he just have remained asleep for the rest of his life. He doesn't like to wake up.

Tommy's tired.

He wonders if this was the same exhaustion that Wilbur and Schlatt and Tubbo had felt; exhaustion where the entire world's fate rested on his shoulders. He wonders if this was how Schlatt had been like, waking up only to drink more booze to numb the pain of everything. He wonders if he's becoming Schlatt, just like how Tubbo was becoming Wilbur.

Tommy's tired.

Wilbur's trenchcoat is still brown but its hems are graying from dust. Often, Purpled had to pry it out of his hands so that they could wash it. Still, no matter how much they wash it, the scent of gunpowder never truly leaves, eerily reminding Tommy of Pogtopia and the finale. *(He isn't sure if he ever wants that scent to leave. He misses Wilbur.)*

Tommy's tired.

Of what, he's not sure.

(4)

He can't breathe.

It's the middle of the fucking night and Purpled finds himself unable to breathe. His breaths are stuttering, his lungs aren't working, he can't fucking *hear*, and he briefly feels his hands dig into his scalp, trying to ground himself.

He's on the couch and he doesn't know where Ranboo or Tommy or Tubbo is. His heart is thundering in his chest, his blood is pounding in his ears, his body is shaking against his will.

"...rpeld?"

There's someone calling his name. Who is that?

"Purpled?"

His name his name his name—

"Purpled, it's me, Tommy."

Purpled looks up sharply and there's TommyInnit in all his tired glory, staring down at Purpled worriedly. Tubbo and Ranboo are nearby, somewhere, but Purpled could care less. He's scared and he doesn't know what to do and his chest feels like it's about to burst.

"Purpled, you need to breathe. In 5—"

He inhales sharply.

"—slower, slower, not that quick—"

He inhales slowly.

"—okay, hold for 3, it's okay, we're not going anywhere—"

He holds.

"—now out for 7 seconds—"

He exhales.

The process repeats and he doesn't know how long it takes until his vision is no longer blacking at the edges, until his heart is no longer thundering, until his blood is no longer pounding, until he can *breathe* again. When he comes back into reality, he stumbles to his feet and Tommy quickly guides him back down to the couch after he nearly faceplants.

"You need to rest, Purp," Tommy murmured. "You're always here for us. Let us be here for you."

Purpled shakes his head. "No," he croaks, "you're all just going to leave."

A hard expression sets into Tommy's gaze and Tubbo and Ranboo slowly ease themselves in Purpled's sides. Tommy sits in front of Purpled, sorrow in his eyes.

"We're not leaving you, Purp," he whispers, "we're all staying together."

And maybe it's the way that Tommy says it or maybe it's the fact that *Tommy* says it but Purpled bursts into tears. How long had he been so lonely? He misses his big brother, his friends, the days when everything was so much simpler and there were no wars and there were no dead idols.

They spent the rest of that evening crying and sleeping on the couch.

(5)

"Tell me, Wilbur, how much longer do you intend for us to play the roles of the fool?"

Schlatt is as impatient as he. The children are planning something, something big, and neither of them wants to miss it. There is no way they'll miss it, not when the strings of fate are darkening with every day that passes by, not when the lines of fate decides that these children will have no happy ending.

The two of them sit in the void, watching through the eyes of Ghostbur and *(formerly)* Friend. They watch as the adults abandon the children, leaving the kids to burn. They watch as Dream corrupts and they watch as these so-called "adults" shift the blame to the children.

Wilbur watches as Niki and Jack crumble, giving in to their anger and fear. He understands them blaming people; he had done that once before after all. Back in the Pogtopian era when his paranoia and insanity consumed him, he had refused to believe that anyone but his own mind was correct.

Schlatt watches as Quackity burns with hatred and vengeance. He supposes that he only has himself to blame for the way that the duck hybrid, a jewel in his own right, burns and bleeds and hurts. He's traumatized Quackity and he doubts that he'll ever forgive himself for all that he's done.

Wilbur watches as Fundy wanders, lost and rejected. Eret tries, bless the traitorous man, but there is no replacing the emptiness in Fundy's heart. The dead man is forced to watch as his son, his *champion*, burns out, and he longs for nothing more than to return and hug his son and reassure his son.

Schlatt watches as Puffy and Sam carry the weight of everyone's sorrows on their shoulders. They're trying, bless them, and it's working. His sister had always been better than him and briefly, he's so terribly *grateful* that she's nothing like his own pathetic self.

Wilbur watches as Technoblade cuts down his *sons* and he contemplates returning back to the living to kill the man that he had once considered a close friend and brother.

Schlatt watches as Philza turns a blind eye to those that had hurt the *children* and he contemplates returning back to the living to kill the man that everyone idolizes as the perfect father.

(Something that Wilbur and Schlatt have begrudgingly come to an agreement on after their deaths are that they were not good role models nor idols. Their friends and peers weren't either. There is no perfect father-figure but if they had to choose someone to keep their children in the hands of, they would definitely choose Sam.)

They watch as Purpled carries the weight of his friends on his shoulders. He's young but he automatically assumes the role of a pillar, of a helper, of always being there when they need him. He's strong and he puts up a mask and strangely enough, the two dead men feel so so proud of him. *(Sometimes, Schlatt feels like slapping himself for his Manberg era and forcing Purpled to hurt his friends. Sometimes, Wilbur feels like punting Punz to the moon for ignoring Purpled.)*

They watch as Ranboo learns to play an instrument, something to keep his mind away from the voices, something that's muscle memory rather than physical memory. The poor boy's been through so much and the two men pity him, wondering just how did the dreamon and the egg both take root in his mind. *(The other three are so supportive and Wilbur knows that Tommy feels the familiar pain just as much as he does as they remember Technoblade playing the violin once long ago. Schlatt wonders, briefly, if Ranboo had ever learned to play Bumblebee.)*

They watch as Tubbo murmurs to himself, drafting out war plans, sketching nuclear weapons that a 17-year-old shouldn't be having knowledge of. The voices howl and scream and demand vengeance and the two men can't help but feel inclined to agree with Tubbo's thirst for blood. *(Schlatt mourns his own failure of being president, placing the world's pressure on Tubbo. Wilbur mourns his own failure of always relying on Tubbo, never seeing when the boy cracked. Now, the boy listens to the voices. At least his loyalty stays to his friends.)*

They watch as Tommy curls in on himself, an empty shell of the boy he used to be. He shakes and cries and he drowns his sorrows in alcohol, much like how Schlatt had done when he was alive. *(Wilbur cries for his brother and he wants nothing more than to hold Tommy and reassure him that everything would be alright. Schlatt wallows and wonders why did he make himself into such a villain. They lament their choices.)*

At least the children have each other. They won't leave each other, they won't *abandon* the others; they won't be like Wilbur and Schlatt, betraying each other the moment that one of their backs were turned.

Wilbur is impatient and he is patient. He is the vessel of peace and chaos, the catalyst of creation and destruction. So, when Schlatt asks him how much longer would they spectate, Wilbur only sighs and gives his other half a bitter smile.

"Not much longer. The SMP won't ever let us rest for long."

Somehow, Schlatt knew that this was the truth. They turned, back to watch the world through Ghostbur's eyes, and they waited.

(6)

Four days before they make a move, the first two sides in his mind find themselves suppressed by the third.

The first side, always the loudest and most annoying to deal with, is a voice that sounds suspiciously like Dream. It gives off a lime aura, much like Dream, and it consistently tells him to cause chaos and commit atrocious acts that he otherwise would've *never* thought of doing. He hates that voice, that hideous voice that won't leave him alone. It's like a parasite, searching for a new host.

The second side is more subdued than the first, an echoing and wispy voice. It's so quiet yet so loud and he dreads every time that this voice speaks. It gives off a crimson aura and he hates it and he wants it to leave. It amplifies when he's near BadBoyHalo and Antfrost and he briefly wonders why it had to be him.

The third side is the quietest, so quiet that it feels like it's not even there. It's his own personality, his own memories, and his own thoughts that he can't even reach anymore because it's been locked in layers and layers of amnesia, barricaded by the other two voices. He wants help, he *needs* help, but there is no exorcist here and the adults are too busy for the children.

In Ranboo's mind, there are three sides.

(7)

Three days before they make a move, Fundy sees Tubbo humming quietly to himself as he walks towards the nukes in Snowchester. For a moment, the fox hybrid is about to call out to the other boy but then he catches a glimpse of the teen's gaze.

His eyes are sharp and full of bitter vengeance. He is unhappy and he is angry and he is more than willing to commit mass destruction to fulfill his bloodlust.

A chill runs down Fundy's spine and he's terrified. For a moment, he doesn't see Tubbo there. All he sees is his father, Wilbur Soot himself, standing there with his trenchcoat flapping behind him, an insane gleam in his eyes. But then Fundy blinks and it's Tubbo standing there, his keratin horns peeking out of his skull, Schlatt's jacket draped on his shoulders.

Fundy swallows audibly and opts to not say anything, leaving a small note where Tubbo's bound to see it. Then, he scampers away. He hopes that nothing will become ruined again.

(Later, Tommy finds the note and he tucks it away quietly. He brings it up to the others and they opt to use TNT instead of nukes; the radiation is too dangerous. Later, he'll meet Fundy's gaze and nod once. Fundy wilts in relief and sorrow.

He could only lessen the damage, not prevent it.)

(8)

Two days before they make a move, Purpled calls his brother a coward.

They're walking near the borders of ex-L'manberg and they're nearing the BadLands. Purpled hates the BadLands. It reeks of corruption and has a truly disgusting aura. His brother's eyes are red now and they gleam dangerously.

"Why won't you come with me, Purp?" Punz asks quietly, almost sadly. "Don't you want to spend time with me?"

Purpled growls, one hand on his sword and the other on his communicator, ready to send a sign to the other three. Ranboo's nearby for quick transportation and he knows that Tommy is immune to the shitty nature of this area.

"You're not my brother," Purpled hisses, "my brother isn't as much of a *coward* as to give in to whatever magical bullshit is around here."

Punz's expression darkens and Purpled slams his finger down on his communicator. Ranboo ends pearls over, grabs Purpled, and teleports them back to Snowchester.

(Later, Tubbo sits Purpled down, Tommy at his side, and the trio of them talk about how garbage family could be. Ranboo watches with interest, supplying them with hot chocolate and chocolate chip cookies. For a moment, they're safe, just four kids at each other's side.)

(9)

One day, not even, before they make their move, Tommy shakily hands them all a music disc.

Cat is given to Tubbo again, even after Ranboo had returned it to Tommy. Chirp is given to Purpled, even though Purpled had never even heard of it. Wait is given to Ranboo despite Ranboo initially refusing to take it.

Tommy's hands are trembling when he hands the discs over and the other three boys have no qualms about taking the discs but then he opens his mouth and starts speaking and promptly crushes their hearts.

"You guys have to return these, okay?" Tommy croaks. "After the battle. You have to return them to me after the battle."

The saying went unsaid: you have to stay alive.

Tubbo reacts first, crushing Tommy in a hug. "We will," he promises, "we won't leave. Not without you."

"You can't leave without us either," Purpled pipes, tucking Wait into his enderchest. "You have to promise us too."

Tommy nods, shakily, tearily, and he's burying himself into Ranboo's shirt, the two tall boys hugging. It was so easy to forget that amidst all of their bloodlust and alcoholism and amnesia and weariness that they were just children.

He wonders what Wilbur would think of them.

(The sky is bright that day, a beautiful illuminating sight.)

(10 PACES FIRE—)

Smoke billows above the lands of the Dream SMP.

Fire dances in the straights, chasing people and ready to burn them to the ground. Crimson ivy vines crawl from the ground, spreading their flowers across the land, embedding their roots into the earth. There screams and cries and shouts but none of those matter to the man that finds himself sprinting across the Greater SMP, past Eret's castle, and stumbling to the entrance of Pandora's Vault.

Sam's there, cautious and wary, but the man does not have any time to explain himself. His explanation is rushed and jumbled but the sheer panic and fear that rolls off his aura must've conveyed something to Sam for the warden let him into the prison with no further questions. They're running now, sprinting towards the ladder. They go down and they pale.

Dream and Purpled are locked in a vicious battle, exchanging blows that always result in scrapes and scratches, and bloodshed. Tommy and Tubbo are crumpled at the side, blood

pouring out of the wound on Tommy's abdomen as his body is draped over Tubbo's battered body. Ranboo is behind Purpled, barely a few feet away, unconscious, evidently having been knocked out.

Purpled was generally no match for Dream, the admin having much more leverage and experience over the teen, but at that moment, Sam and Karl watched in horror as Dream was repeatedly surprised by Purpled. The teen paid no attention to the wounds on his body, snarling as he swung his sword, cleaning loping off a few strands of Dream's hair.

"GIVE UP PURPLED!" Dream cackled, his voice eerie and loud. "YOU'LL NEVER WIN AGAINST ME!"

Purpled gritted his teeth and stepped forward, ducking beneath Dream's ax attack and slicing his sword upward, causing the mask to crack and break. Dream gasped in surprise, faltering, and Purpled brought his sword down onto Dream's chest, piercing his heart.

Dream shrieked and kicked Purpled back, body fading. Purpled, Sam, and Karl watched as Dream faded away and respawned in the same spot. Two lives left.

"Wait, Purpled, wait—" Dream backtracked but Purpled brought the sword down again, this time, decapitating Dream.

The process repeated. Dream faded and respawned back where he was standing.

Purpled brought his sword down and—

A thump sounded from the back of his neck and he fell, unconscious. Karl stood behind Purpled, catching the boy, as Sam restrained Dream. The mask, cracked and shattered, was withering away into ash. Dream was struggling but Karl had instructed Sam on what to do.

Sam placed the runic handcuffs on Dream and there was an unholy shriek. In front of their very eyes, Dream began to split, his skin darkening to black, tattoos appearing, eyes deepening to a poisonous lime green with black sclera. Sam hissed in hatred, recognizing this *monster*, this *creature* that had tormented them at the beginning of the SMP.

"DreamXD," He hissed. "You *monster*."

Punz stepped through the portal, having felt something happened to his brother, having received an urgent message from Karl. Sapnap and Quackity were on his heels for if there were anyone that Karl would remember, it would be his fiances. Punz rushed to pick up Purpled whilst Sapnap and Quackity did the same for the other three children, Sapnap paling at the sight of the Dreamon.

"We have to imprison them," Karl whispered to the other four's surprise. "Keep the children and the dreamon in Pandora's Vault until we can get help and remove the Egg."

"Karl, what's going on?" Sapnap called, desperate.

Karl shook his head violently, running a hand down his face, eyebags prominent and deep. "I'll explain everything later. For now, let's just get them all into Pandora's Vault."

He stalked over to the dreamon, the dreamon that was still snarling and hissing and shrieking. He crouched down, met gazes with the dreamon, and ever-so-slightly, Karl *growled*.

"::T::L::L· | 4 J=:: R::L·J·J?"

("Where is our Dream?")

Chapter End Notes

End Excerpt: Karl and DreamXD

As revealed, Karl knows something that the others don't. He's a time traveler for a reason and he's seen something. He returns and albeit it isn't explicitly stated, Punz is no longer infected by the egg, hence him coming to Purpled's aid.

The runic bindings that Sam uses on "Dream" reveals that it's a Dreamon named DreamXD. I'll go more into this next chapter but you're all free to speculate for now. With all that said, I apologize for taking so long to write this chapter but I literally wrote like four versions of this chapter. Bear with me.

Thank you for your support and I hope you all enjoyed. <3

Shackle

Chapter Summary

Shackled to the earth, bound to unending agony.

TW // read tags , mentions of gore

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy wakes up and he's alone. He scrambles for his flask only to find that it's not there. He swivels around to find himself in a tiny cell and he feels the claustrophobia set in. It feels suffocating, the walls are closing in, he *swears* that he can feel Dream standing there, waiting for him to turn around.

He screams in fear.

Tubbo wakes up and he's alone. He sits back on his rear and he thinks, examining his cage. It's small, very small, and his breath hitches as he remembers Pogtopia and the yellow concrete box during the first festival. He thinks that he can hear Schlatt's booming voice and Technoblade's emotionless apology. A scream pierces the air and he spins, breaths coming out shallow.

Slamming his hands against the bars, he roars with fury.

Ranboo wakes up and he's alone. He huddles in a corner and he doesn't know if he can *breathe* because it feels like he's back at the execution stand and he's about to be drowned with water. There's someone screaming down the hall and someone roaring nearby but he's not registering them. The other two voices in his mind are demanding bloodshed and he doesn't know what to do.

He curls up slightly and whimpers in pain.

Purpled wakes up and he's alone. He's not surprised, to say the least. Rather, he reminisces on how Sam and Karl had shown up. Why had they shown up? Was it to save Dream? It must've

been. Nobody was on their side, after all. Adults couldn't be trusted. He can feel the presence of the other three boys nearby but he doubts that they can escape.

As he listens to the cries of the others, he silently wonders who's going to bring them food.

(I heard there was a special place)

Karl stood in the midst of the room, Sam and Punz standing warily behind him. Sapnap and Quackity were on either side of Punz and the four of them watched Karl apprehensively as the man stalked up to the demon that was shackled in runic shackles.

"Locking me up here won't do anything," the dreamon grins, revealing long fangs that gleamed in the dim light, "all you're doing is delaying the inevitable."

"Answer my question," Karl hisses, "where is *our* Dream?"

"Who knows?!" The dreamon cackles. "Isn't it better if he's gone? At least he won't be associated with fear and trauma!"

The dreamon's laugh is hideous and cruel and it mocks Karl whose hands clenches into fists. Karl hates this creature, that creature that's altered so many realities and timelines and ruined the lives of many people. He doesn't know which one he hates more, honestly— the Egg or DreamXD, this dreamon,

He hates them both. (*He wants to destroy them.*)

"Karl," Sam calls, breaking through the mess that's his mind, "what's going on?"

Karl turns to his friends and feels his breath stop short. How is he supposed to tell them of what he is? How is he supposed to explain that he's seen them die over and over again and that the only reason he was able to stop DreamXD and lock up the four teens was because the future was far too bleak and dreadful to be allowed to happen? How is he supposed to explain that he's a time traveler, a time traveler that doesn't even know how his own powers work?

He doesn't realize he's hyperventilating until he stumbles backward, right into someone's chest.

"Dream?" Sapnap whispers.

Karl looks up to see Dream, the *actual* Dream, standing there. Karl exhales shakily as the dreamon snarls in anger.

"Yo," Dream lifts a hand, "It's been a while."

"Where have you *been*?" Karl whispers, briefly aware that his hands were shaking. "You've been *gone* for so long. Look at the carnage that has happened!"

Dream winces, the XD on his mask covering his expression. "I was sealed for a while," he murmurs, "I only recently came back. I wasn't aware that he's done all this."

"He's a dreamon for a reason," Karl hisses, "in addition to that abominable egg in your lands, you need to learn how to take *responsibility*. I heard from Philza and Technoblade that you took away their table instead of being here when the lands needed you most."

Dream winces at this but they're interrupted by a screech.

(Where men could go and emancipate)

The six adults raced through the halls and came to a skidding halt when they saw the corridors of cells, the four kids having been placed in four small cells near each other. The sounds were anguish-filled, rage-filled, screeching against their ears as they paled.

"WHERE DID THE HELL DID YOU TAKE THEM?!" Tubbo roared upon seeing them, knuckles stark-white from gripping the bars. "GIVE THEM BACK!"

Dream swallowed audibly, hiding behind Sam's towering stature. Karl steps forward and his expression softens as he talks to the teen. "Tubbo, it's me, Karl."

"I don't care who the fuck you are," Tubbo hisses, "I can *hear* Tommy screaming and Ranboo crying. Bring me to them *now*."

Karl winces. "I can't—"

A scream pierces the air and they all flinch, Tubbo's eyes widening and panic entering his gaze. "Tommy!" He screeches. "TOMMY!"

Sam turns to Karl. "I have a bigger cell down the hall. We can bring them all there so that this will stop happening. Is that alright?"

The shorter male inhales deeply before exhaling shakily. "Y-Yeah, you do that."

As Sam and the others race off to bring Tubbo and the others into the larger cell, Dream and Karl are left standing in front of Tubbo's now-empty cell. Karl's eyes are unfocused and Dream can only stare at him helplessly.

"How are your memories?" Dream offers.

"Fading," Karl responds, "they barely stayed. They only stayed because the world would've ended had Purpled killed XD."

"Tell me about it, then," Dream says quietly, "tell me about the future you foresaw."

Darkness flickers across Karl's eyes and his fists clench and unclench. "Future?" He laughs, a short cruel laugh. "If Purpled had won that fight, Dream, there would've been *no future*."

"What?"

"You heard me." Karl turns to him, an empty expression on his face. "There would've been no future if Purpled won."

Dream inhales sharply.

"Tell me what you saw."

"I can't."

(From the brutality and tyranny of their rulers)

Purpled is tugged out of his cell by his older brother and then promptly dumped into a larger cell. He instantly abandons Punz (ignoring the elder's heartbroken glance) and makes a beeline for the other three teens, plopping down. Immediately, like a mother hen, he checks up on all of them.

"Tommy, Tubbo, hold onto each other. You're not going to be separated. Ranboo, can you hear me? It's Purpled. Focus on my voice. The other two voices are little bitches. Don't listen to them."

His voice is steady and flows naturally as if he's done this a million times before. The other three listen and quiet down, slowly calming themselves. Purpled then turns toward Sam, an unimpressed stoic expression on his face.

"You're going to have to return Tommy's flask." He says calmly. "Unless you want more breakdowns, I'd suggest you give it back. You've all done enough damage as it is."

Sam casts Punz an uneasy glance but relents, tossing the flask inside, still filled with liquid. Instantly, Tommy scrambles for it and takes a swig, his eyes glazing over as he slumps against Tubbo's awaiting arms. Purpled sighs and motions for Ranboo to lean on the other side of Tubbo, which the ender-hybrid does, before pushing the three against the wall. Then, he sits cross-legged in front of them, purple eyes narrowed.

"Get some sleep," he murmurs to the three, "I'll handle it here."

"You sure?" Ranboo whispers. "I can stay awake if you want."

Purpled flashes him a smile. "Nah, don't worry. I can do this."

"Okay."

With that Ranboo nods at Tubbo and the two of them join Tommy in the realm of slumber. Purpled watches them fondly before allowing the warmth to bleed out of his stature, turning to the adults. He bares his teeth and Punz can't help but notice with an aching heart that his little brother looks a lot like a cornered animal right now.

"Let us out of here," Purpled demands.

"Are you going to try to kill Dream here?" Karl asks quietly.

"Hell yeah. Look at all he's done. Of course, I'm going to kill him."

Karl sits down in front of the cell, gazing coldly through the iron bars. "Then we can't let you out."

"What is up with you?" Purpled frowns. "You've never gotten into conflict before and now, *suddenly*, you want to protect Dream and imprison us?"

"Listen to me when I say this, Purpled." Karl leans in, eyes flashing darkly. "If you four continue down this path, there is no guarantee that anyone can help you. There is no future past this point."

Purpled looked taken aback for a moment before a deprecating smile appeared on his face. "Well, that's alright. No future is better than any future with Dream around."

Karl flinches. "That's not....that's not *this* Dream's fault. That's all XD's fault."

"Who the hell is XD?"

"The dreamon that took on my appearance." Dream steps forward mournfully, removing his mask to reveal forest-green eyes and a scar-littered and freckled face. "I'm very sorry. I fear that he has tarnished my image for the rest of the time. There was nothing I could do considering I was sealed."

"Nothing you could do?" The teen's hands clenched into fists. "Fuck you. You should've thrown him out. You *ruined* our *lives*."

Dream looked heartbroken. "I know," he breathed out, "I know."

"I'll never forgive any of you in this fucking world," Purpled stands, slamming his body against the bars, eyes crazed and hands curled around the individual bars, causing Karl to flinch back again. "I'll get *vengeance* for all that you've all done. I'll never forgive any of you for hurting *them*."

The *them* that was referred to was glaringly obvious without their names even being said.

Punz moves forward, reaching forward but his younger brother only hisses. "Purp?"

"Fuck *off*," Purpled growls. "You're never there. You haven't been here for a *long* fucking time. All I remember is you meeting *Dream* and leaving me behind? Was the grandeur of money worth leaving your brother?"

"I—"

"All I remember is Alyssa and Callahan and Sam," he went on, "all I remember is having *fun* with them. And then Alyssa vanished, Callahan's barely around, and Sam's too busy. Skeppy and Bad were nice until they became obsessed with that egg like you were. Fucking *failures*, all of you."

Punz wilted but Sam stepped forward.

"I'm sorry," Sam murmured, "I'm sorry that you all had to go through this."

"This is my fault," Dream sighs, "if I didn't let XD take over, then everything could've been prevented."

"It's not just you," Purpled says coldly. "It's all of you. You're all contributing to our current states. Now, look at what we are. We went from a catalyst duo of happiness, an amnesiac child of innocence, and a casual builder to absolutely scarred. Tommy's a fucking alcoholic, Tubbo's gone off the rails, Ranboo's like two seconds away from going insane, and I'm stuck piecing it all together."

His eyes flash.

"If it were up to me and not Tommy," he says in a low voice of absolute seriousness, "I would've killed all of you ages ago."

(Well this place is real, you needn't fret)

Karl doesn't want to remember but it's all there in his mind.

It's the one future that he's vowed to change, the one future that he's vowed to never forget, the one future in which is somewhat near to the current time. He's never seen anything like it and he never wants to see it again.

He remembers it all.

He remembers how he stepped out of the portal to find the lands of the server in ruin. He remembers how there were still people meandering about but they looked hollow, dull as if their spirits have been broken and removed. Amongst them were Bad and Skeppy. They still held traces from the Crimson Infection but everything was dulled and they sported new scars. They mostly stuck next to each other and quietly did gardening or patrol without interacting with others.

He passed by the prison and Sam and Punz were guarding it. Punz's eyes were wary and wide, glancing around for any hint of danger. When he saw Karl, he nudged Sam slightly. Sam's eyes traveled over and they widened too before he nodded at Karl coldly. They were not allies in this foreign land; they were mere bystanders who would obey the winning side.

He ducks through the grounds and he sees that the remains of the community house have been replaced with a house. A house that looks all too familiar like something Tommy and Tubbo would build. He moves past it, taking note of the flowers planted outside.

He moves towards Eret's castle, one of the few places that remain unaffected despite the Blackstone and obsidian walls that now surround it. When he sneaks in, Eret's quick to greet him with relief and concern. ("You've been missing for a year, Karl. Sapnap and Quackity were frantic when you went missing.") He got the story in fragments from Eret and Fundy alike.

The others who managed to escape the four children's wraths were hiding in this castle. It was one of the few places that survived the massacre of nuking. Tubbo had set his three nukes after they defeated Dream; one on Technoblade's cabin, one on the Crimson Egg's location, and one on Dream's vault. How they had it found it was unknown but they did.

They TNT-ed the rest of the SMP's lands.

Karl had been horrified and at that time, he finally noticed it. His time-traveling powers prevented him from being affected but the others had already been affected by the radiation and trauma.

Bad and Skeppy weren't just hollow from the infection; they were *dying* from the radiation. Eret had always hidden their eyes before but now they wore a black blindfold; they explained quietly that their eyes had been removed in exchange for Niki's life. It had been an ultimatum given by Tubbo and Eret had agreed with little to no hesitation.

Fundy had dozens of burn scars on his fur but he explained that it was relatively light in comparison to what the others had. Niki, who sat quietly in the corner of the room, was still nursing her bruised throat. Purpled had nearly strangled her before Eret had given up their eyes. Jack was missing an arm, courtesy of Ranboo.

George and Sapnap had left a week after the nukes but were tracked down and brought back by Tubbo. ("I won't forgive them. I'll never forgive them." "Be lenient. They left the pissbaby already.") The duo was kept in the remnants of Dream's vault, left to rot. Quackity had been shackled to the docks, left to drown. Within the week, Puffy broke the three out, grabbed Foolish from his temple prison, and ran.

Technoblade and Philza were still missing. Their bodies were never recovered.

("I'll come back," Puffy said quietly, eyes haunted as the four males cowered behind her. Eret nodded, a mutual understanding behind the two. "Watch everyone else until I can get these four to safety. I'll leave them with Sparklez and the others and come back.")

"Be safe," Eret whispered hollowly.

"You too.)

All good things came to an end for Tubbo arrived and demanded that Eret hand over Karl lest their hideout be destroyed. Eret looked horrified but Karl quickly volunteered and walked out. Tubbo had been terrifying, nothing like the innocent boy he once was. Tommy stood behind Tubbo, eyes dull, gazing at Karl with cold indifference.

Karl had been through into the prison where he had then met both Dream and XD. Dream explained the ritual to shackle XD whilst XD quietly agreed that this future could not stand.

A portal opened and Karl returned home with a mission that he had no choice but to fulfill.

(*REDACTED*)

XD sits in his cell, alone, shivering slightly at the cold. His strange, elongated black limbs were brought against his chest, hoping to bring some type of warmth to his ice-cold body. He's tired and now that he's been discovered, his host's body is returned to Dream and he is forced back into this monstrous form. Quietly, near silently, he hums a quiet tune to himself.

Mellohi.

He's tired. He wonders if he closes his eyes, he could return to his paradise. It just *had* to be a time traveler ending his utopia. Did the universe hate him? He doesn't quite know.

"So. You got discovered."

His eyes flit towards the corner of the cell, the shadows, where a familiar figure stands. The girl is standing there, her porcelain mask glinting, her mouth set in a straight line beneath it. He wonders if she would've been a better host than her brother. She has tenacity and strength, though. She would be harder to steal from.

"Drista," he greets, voice echoey and hollow, a trait all of his kind has, "you're late to the party, I'm afraid."

"I didn't intend to arrive at the party anyway," she shrugs, leaning against the wall. "So, what now? You've been discovered, Karl is going to fix everything, Dream's going to expose you. What are you going to do?"

XD smirks cruelly, a facade that he's sure even she can see through. "Repeat, of course. Runes can't bind me forever, little girl."

She stiffens and before he can even look away, she's thrusting her ax underneath his throat, hissing. "Don't you *dare* get near my brother and his friends again. You deserve to rot in the deepest pits of the Void."

XD smiles coldly. "You used to call me your brother as well, you know."

Drista growls angrily but XD drops his smile, lifting a leg and kicking her aside, causing her to grunt slightly. He turns away from her, stretching his arms slightly before curling up into a small ball.

"Leave, Drista." He says quietly. "This prison is not meant for the likes of you."

"Will you leave?"

"Perhaps," he whispers quietly, "perhaps."

She turns away, retreating to the shadows, pausing before entering them again. "For what it's worth, I still don't understand why you did what you did. I don't see why you're still hiding behind this stupid XD facade. Just tell Dream the truth; he'll understand."

XD's tattoos glow slightly and his eyes dim. He exhales slightly. "Goodbye, sister."

"...goodbye, Nightmare."

He's alone in this cage again. He wonders if there's an enchanter in these lands that can remove these tattoos. He closes his eyes and returns to slumber, internally weeping for his lost utopia.

(It wasn't fair. Why could Dream have glory when Nightmare was banished to the shadows?

It wasn't fair.)

(It's a very big and *REDACTED* blown up L'manberg)

"...don't trust them..."

"....no other choice!"

"Guys, quiet down..."

Tommy stirred, vision foggy, a throbbing pain resting behind his eyes and in his temples. Sitting up slowly, he blinked a few times, taking in his surroundings. He was still in prison but the cell was much larger this time, tall enough that he could stand and wide enough that

he could properly lay down. Nearby, Tubbo, Purpled, and Ranboo halted their conversation, turning to him.

"Good morning, Toms," Purpled greeted, nodding at him. "Do you want bread?"

"Y-Yeah," Tommy whispered, voice hoarse. His throat ached slightly, most likely from the screaming that he did when he had first awoken in that dreadfully tiny cage cell. Purpled tossed a loaf over and Tommy fumbled slightly before bringing it down to his lap safely. Ripping off a small chunk and chewing on it, he glanced over to them again. "What were you guys talking about?"

Tubbo and Purpled glanced at each other but Ranboo only sighed. "They were just talking about what we should do from here on out."

"Ranboo!" Purpled hisses.

"What? He's technically the quote-on-quote 'leader' of this group. He has to know at some point."

Tommy frowned as he thoughtfully chewed the bread. It was stale, lacking taste, and he briefly took a swig from his nearly drained flask to wash down the hard bread, blatantly ignoring Tubbo's glance of sorrow. "Well...what options do we have?"

"We could continue with our original plan to finish the nukes and then blow this place to hell." Tubbo piped up.

"We can't do that if Karl and DreamXD—"

"Who?"

"The dreamon."

"Oh."

"We can't blow this place up if Karl stops us and DreamXD is still around."

"Or," Ranboo lit up, "we can break out and run away. We can make our own new lives."

Purpled mused over it whilst Tubbo faltered. "They're not going to let us," Tubbo muttered bitterly, "if they would, I would've left a long time ago. These people don't care about our suffering as long as we can take the blame for them and remove the guilt from their souls."

"We don't have materials either," Purpled said, "they've probably ransacked our house by now to see if we were hiding anything."

"Ransacked?" Tommy flinched. "Even all our...stuff?"

A solemn look came over Purpled's face and he sighed. "I don't know, Toms. I don't know if they burned all the plushies and stuff or not."

Tommy shivered and curled further into Tubbo's side. "...if it's not destroyed, then we can go get our stuff and leave."

"What?!" Tubbo cried out, causing the other three to wince. "We can just kill them!"

"And what would that do, Tubbo?" Tommy whispered. "We'll be just as bad as them. Don't you remember Wilbur and Techno? Dream?"

Tubbo glanced away bitterly.

(Our L'manberg)

"There's nothing left for us here," Tommy explains. "Our families hate us, we've caused just as much destruction as the others have, and we don't want anything to do with them. If we leave and move on, it'll be the ultimate victory."

"I thought you wanted revenge," Purpled says pointedly.

"The best form of revenge would be to show that they never affected us," Ranboo grins, "if we move on and lead peaceful lives, we'll never have to deal with war again. They can come for us but we can just show that we're *mature* and we know how to handle things in more peaceful ways than war."

Tubbo frowns. "But...that's nothing like what we planned."

"Sometimes, things don't go according to plan," Ranboo sighs. "We would all know."

"I'm all for leaving," Tommy admits quietly. "I...I want to just make a cottage and *live*. I want to make all the cobblestone towers I want, I want to sew more plushies for our collection, I want to make a flower farm...there's so much stuff that we can do if we leave."

He looks up timidly. "Come with?"

Ranboo beams. "Of course!"

Purpled shrugs. "I'm the designated underage adult so yeah, I'll come to make sure you don't die from eating the wrong berry or something."

They turn to Tubbo who shrinks under all their gazes.

"...if we leave," he chooses his words carefully, "can we make a bee farm?"

Tommy blinks before laughing in delight.

"Anything for you, Tubs."

Tubbo smiles back.

"Alright then. Let's go."

(Our *REDACTED*)

"Wilbur Soot, if you don't get your ass over here, I'm going to throw a riot."

"I'm coming, I'm coming, jeez."

Wilbur scrambled over to where Schlatt was waiting near the thinnest part of the void. They were going to break out today, with or without the rest of the server's help. Ghostbur was waiting on the other side, waiting to swap with them, and Drista was ready with her brother's book of revival.

"You're so slow," Schlatt grumbled, "we don't even have a fucking mirror. How are you taking so long?"

"If I'm going to be dramatic and whatever, I need to have aesthetic," Wilbur snapped back, "something I doubt *you* would understand."

"We're literally reviving in our sweatshirts." Schlatt deadpanned. "What 'aesthetic' could you possibly want to uphold?"

"...you make a fair point."

They stand together and Schlatt glances over to Wilbur who was nervously shuffling a deck of cards. "What are we going to do when we get back, Wil?"

Wilbur blinks before smiling. "We're going to fix everything. We'll save the children."

"If we're too late?"

Wilbur's smile fades slightly and his expression darkens, lips curling into a snarl.

"Then we make them pay."

Schlatt finds himself smiling.

"I agree."

They stepped through the void's veil.

In the living world, Wilbur and Schlatt's bodies lay in front of Drista and Ghostbur in Dream's vault. She chanted the runes and Ghostbur focused on his other self's soul. Slowly, the wind slowed down and color returned to the bodies.

Then, their eyes shot open and they took their first breaths in months.

Chapter End Notes

I am so sorry that this took forever but here it is! The "glitched" L'manberg anthem lyrics were inspired by [ToKtopus' Villains animatic from back in October 2020](#).

I've been struggling to write for this fandom for a while since I no longer watch the streams and such so you all will probably see me post less and less MCYT stuff in the future.

Don't worry, I'm not leaving yet, it's just that I'm no longer as much invested as I used to be in summer and autumn of 2020 and school is kinda hitting hard right now.

I don't have a definite answer for when chapter 4 of this fic will be up and if it will be up before the summer due to my SATs. We'll see, I guess.

I hope you all enjoyed and thank you all for sticking by my side all this time. <3 Much love~

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!